



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Champions for Change Help Women in Ghana Exercise Their Rights



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Gladys Adusah leads a workshop to empower community members in Brong Ahafo to advocate for their rights.

Water pollution is a potential consequence of mining, and in Ghana—where safe water is already scarce—such pollution can make the quest for safe water even more difficult. This additional hardship falls on women and girls most of all. Some have to take hours away from school or work to travel to far off places, such as muddy dugouts, in search of usable water for drinking, washing and irrigation.

Legal mining is, however, a legitimate source of economic opportunity in Ghana. Mineral exports constitute a full 30 percent of the country's total exports. What's more, Ghanaians have rights they can use to minimize the effects that mining has on both water and soil. But many are unaware of these rights or how to exercise them. This is especially true for women.

Many women are unaware, for example, of their right to negotiate payment from mining companies for accessing and using their land, and many believe that, rather than speaking for themselves, they must have their chief represent them in mining company negotiations.

Local champions are now addressing this lack of awareness. Through a Feed the Future training program called Champions for Change, community members learn how to run workshops that inform participants (both women and men) of the consequences of mining and how to take action against its detrimental effects. One of these local champions, farmer Gladys Adusah, has held workshops in three regions. In the Brong Ahafo region, known as the "food basket" of Ghana, she has worked with a local association to teach women how to negotiate good compensation from mining companies and how to advocate for major changes in the existing mining policy.

In these workshops, she explains what compensation from the mining companies can do. For one, it can offset mining-related income losses for individuals. It can also provide communities with resources to build infrastructure for potable water. The workshops also teach women how to make soap, washing detergent and dyes, which they can sell during the agricultural off-

season—all part of an effort to empower them to become more self-sufficient and confident.

Since taking Adusah's workshops, women have sought major changes in the existing mining policy. These include involving communities in forging agreements with mining companies and achieving gender balance in the signing process.

Workshops aren't the only way Adusah has applied her Feed the Future-acquired skills and knowledge. She has also presented papers at international events on such issues as empowering women to advocate at local, regional and even international levels. In her view, there are both geographic and mental barriers to overcome. "We should not be limited to wherever we are," she said, "but continue to explore as leaders and work beyond the borders, visualize, focus and think ahead of time in our respective activities—and also promote food security."